

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are pending in the present application. Claim 2 is subject to a restriction/election requirement. The status of claim 11 is uncertain but is believed to be "withdrawn from consideration as directed to a nonelected species." Claims 1 and 3-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Shin, U.S. Patent No. 5,120,085. Claims 1-4, 6 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Saito, U.S. Patent No. 5,343,892. By the present amendment, the applicant has amended claim 1. Reconsideration of the rejections in light of the amendment is respectfully requested.

Although the Office Action does not specifically refer to claim 11, it is noted that claim 11 is directed to a provisionally nonelected embodiment of the present invention. Therefore, the applicant is treating claim 11 as though it were withdrawn from further consideration. However, as noted in the applicant's previous paper concerning the election, it is respectfully pointed out that claim 1, from which claim 11 depends, is generic, and as is discussed in greater detail below, allowable as amended.

The applicant has amended the specification, and specifically paragraph 0012 thereof, to refer to the corresponding U.S. reference instead of the German Published Patent Application referred to in that paragraph originally. No new matter has been added.

Turning now to the merits of the application, the applicant has amended claim 1 so as to clarify the arrangement of the various elements of the ring with regard to the valve housing and the drive element being mounted thereto. Specifically, claim 1 now recites "an inwardly directed collar disposed in abutment on one side thereof to the cylindrical shoulder of the housing," and "wherein the collar by its other side and the locking elements together form a receptacle for the drive element shoulder for engaging in a snap connection with the at least one

projection." The preamble has been further clarified to specify that the drive element is mounted upon a cylindrical shoulder of the valve housing.

The rejection of claim 1 is based upon Shin and Saito. Both Shin and Saito are principally directed to the question of making longitudinal snap connections of pipes, rather than to a device for mounting a drive element onto a housing of a valve. It is respectfully submitted that neither Shin nor Saito, nor any of the other references made of record but not relied upon, teach or suggest a ring having an inwardly directed collar disposed in abutment on one side thereof to the cylindrical shoulder of the housing, nor does any of the cited references teach an arrangement wherein the collar by its other side, together with the locking elements, forms a receptacle for the drive element.

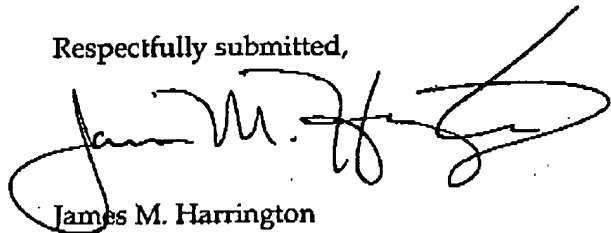
It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 1 as amended clearly defines over the prior art made of record, and as such is allowable. Because claims 2-11 depend, directly or indirectly, from allowable claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that they are likewise allowable.

CONCLUSION

Based on all the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance, and reconsideration of the rejections in light of the amendment and the remarks above, an early indication of allowability, and passage to issuance are earnestly solicited.

The Office is invited to contact the undersigned attorney for applicant at (704) 331-7541 if such is deemed necessary or expedient to the progress of the application.

Respectfully submitted,



James M. Harrington
Reg. No. 47,632
Attorney for Applicant
Kennedy Covington Lobdell & Hickman, LLP
Hearst Tower, 47th Floor
214 North Tryon Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28202
(704) 331-7541

**RECEIVED
CENTRAL FAX CENTER**

OCT 22 2003

OFFICIAL